

Seniors have put in a lifetime of hard work, helping to make our economy grow and make our nation great. They deserve a safe, healthy, and secure retirement. That is why in Congress, I have been working hard to promote policies that respect our seniors and promote their well being and fighting proposals that would make your golden years more insecure.

Medicare Part D: While inclusion of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries is long overdue, Medicare Part D prescription coverage needs to be improved. Some seniors have had a great experience with this coverage and others have gotten stuck in the donut hole or found that their insurance companies pulled the old “bait and switch” technique on them, increasing prices on certain drugs or dropping coverage on others altogether.

To help with these problems, I support allowing the government to negotiate prices directly with manufacturers. It is hard to believe that current law prohibits this basic price reduction tool. I also voted for the CHAMP Act (the Children’s Health and Medicare Protection Act). The CHAMP Act would ensure that more low-income seniors can enroll in the Extra Help program, and get the extra financial help they deserve. It would also ensure that, if your insurance company changes its list of covered drugs midyear, you can change your plan mid-year. Finally, the bill would require that every prescription drug insurance plan cover virtually all drugs in certain key categories, including drugs necessary for transplant patients and those with epilepsy and related disorders. The CHAMP Act would have paid for these improved benefits by cutting overpayments to private health insurance companies. Although this important bill died in the Senate, I am confident that Congress will have more success at improving Medicare Part D in the future.

Although President Bush dropped his attempt to privatize Social Security, I am ready to defend it should the proposal rise again. Dismantling the promise of Social Security would take away guaranteed, inflation proof benefits for today’s children and young adults. No one wants to return to the tragic days before Social Security, when seniors would work until the day they died because they could not afford to retire. To honor a lifetime of work and service, I will continue working with my colleagues to protect and strengthen Social Security. As part of this commitment, I am a proud co-sponsor of the Social Security Fairness Act, a bill which would eliminate the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, two provisions that limit the Social Security benefits of public servants like teachers, police officers, fire fighters, and veterans.